



STATE OF WASHINGTON

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Moses Lake
Public Meeting
Minutes
November 8, 2003

Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Leo Gaeta, Yvonne Lopez Morton, Gabriel Banfi, Faviola Barbosa, Uriel Iñiguez, and Homero Tamez.

Commissioners absent: Diana Avalos, Faviola Barbosa, Edward Davila, Gabriel Portugal.

Staff present: Antonio Ginatta.

Meeting called to order at 9:12 a.m.

1. Administrative Issues:

- Meeting locations for 2004 were adjusted in consideration of needs of the community and commissioner recommendations. New locations were recommended:
 - Jan 22-23 Olympia
 - March 12-13 Pasco
 - May 14-15 Spokane
 - July 9-10 Longview
 - Sept. 17-18 Yakima
 - Nov. 12-13 Bellevue

Commissioner Lopez-Morton made a motion to accept the change in dates.
Commissioner Banfi seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Gaeta reported that Commissioner Davila resigned from the Commission due to new responsibilities as acting president of Grupo Mexico. The Personnel Committee would begin its search for a replacement.

Chair Gaeta announced the appointment of a new commissioner from the NW Washington area, Rebecca Villareal.

1210 Eastside St. 1st Floor PO Box 40924 Olympia, WA 98504-0924
Toll-Free: (800) 443-0294 Olympia: (360) 753-3159 Fax: (360) 753-0199
hispanic@cha.wa.gov www.cha.wa.gov

Commissioners reported on their activities.

Commissioner Iñiguez: This is his second meeting, and he is working to learn more about Latino organizations in the South Puget Sound area, and is meeting key people at agencies to discuss how best to build bridges and serve the Latino population.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton: Has been meeting with school representatives to discuss WASL scores and Latinos. Has also been meeting with law enforcement representatives to discuss how best to diversify their workforce. Met with the Editorial Board of the Spokane Spokesman-Review.

Chair Gaeta: Has been involved with a community organizing effort in Royal City and has also been involved with several efforts in Mattawa. The Mayor of Mattawa has stated that the town requires a Community Needs Assessment; the town of Quincy has undergone a similar assessment and it is productive. One of the issues to discuss is what to do about the Eperanza Project, 40 housing units available only during the harvest season.

Commissioner Banfi: Discussed the 1st Heritage Spanish Cultural Event, held in Bellevue. Also participated in the Candidates Forum held by the Eastside Latino Leadership Forum.

Commissioner Barbosa: This is her first meeting as a commissioner. She discussed her work with the Wenatchee Community Center. She is the outgoing president of the North Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber Scholarship applications will be available in the next week. For the first time, the scholarship would not require Social Security numbers or legal residence verification.

Commissioner Tamez: Discussed his work with the “Los Niños Educados” project. Has been advocating for injured farmworkers in the Tri-Cities area. Participated in the local Fiestas Patrias and the Latino Leadership Summit.

Director Ginatta: Discussed the Brewster Bridge Street problem and the work of the CHA to inform Department of Transportation about the matter. Discussed Latino voter involvement and the Woodland example, where a group of Latinas and persons who supported Latino issues worked to elect a new mayor and city councilpersons more supportive of Latino issues in the area.

Director Ginatta also discussed the results of the recent CHA audit: no findings, but one management letter issue regarding inappropriate travel approval by the agency’s accountants. The issue has been resolved. Discussed the administrative steps necessary to avoid the smaller problems identified in the audit.

2. Public comments:

Idolina Reta from the Human Rights Commission discussed the Esperanza Project with Chair Gaeta. One of the problems preventing its year-round use is that funds used to pay for the project specified seasonal use.

Chair Gaeta stated that Catholic Charity Services will be opening 40 units year around to accommodate these families. The community needs assessment is very crucial. A social worker from DSHS stated that there is a program through DSHS for undocumented families to apply for housing assistance. It is only available once a year.

3. State Department of Health Presentation by Joanne Prado & Tito Rodriguez:

DOH performed a study of farmworkers who worked with pesticides and their experiences and understanding of health care options. Specifically, what would get them to seek medical care. The majority of the focus group respondents would not seek care for mild to moderate symptoms because of economic concerns (eg. employer retaliation, costs of treatment).

Julio Romero: What action is CHA going to take on this issue? Chair Gaeta stated that Labor and Industries representatives were present to discuss some of these concerns. The Commission will continue to advise legislators and the governor on the importance of addressing issues involving farmworker health. Director Ginatta stated that CHA supported greater enforcement capacity by L&I to address workplace safety concerns.

Jose Rodriguez (L&I Spanish Language Communications Manager): L&I is placing educational ads in El Mundo as well as running radio campaigns. New rules for monitoring worker exposure to cholinesterase inhibitors would likely be in place in the next few weeks.

A community member asked if companies were producing pesticides, why weren't they also providing safety training to the purchaser?

The response was that this is not currently happening. The state is working on identifying the pesticides that are harmful due to exposure. Companies are developing information about chemicals that are placed on labels on the containers, but these labels are not in Spanish.

Janie Meza, Opportunities Industrialization Center: OIC is developing a pesticide education course. The curriculum will include pesticide safety, application, and education.

4. Public Comments:

Sharon Ortiz & Idolina Reta from the Human Rights Commission. Discussed NIMBY (Not in my back yard) issues in the realm of housing discrimination. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Justice are reviewing NIMBY type claims in Benton City and Pasco. The Human Rights Commission is working to educate the community on its civil rights regarding housing and other matters. HRC has new staff (two investigators, Spanish fluent), two intake staff in Eastern Washington (also bilingual), and two managers and two commissioners from Eastern Washington.

Outside of housing, HRC areas of coverage include employment, public services, insurance and credit discrimination. People are usually scared to file complaints against employer or landlord due to fear of losing their job, being evicted, or fear of contacting a government agency.

The HRC is working to build partners in the community, such as agencies, organization, and churches. The goal is to offer training on human rights to these partners and thereby provide better access to HRC. One such connection is through the Migrant Council.

Commissioner Barbosa asked about the statute of limitations for filing a complaint? Six months for most claims under the Law Against Discrimination.

Dora Trevino: Discussed her work with the anti-gang, anti-violence coalition in Wenatchee. She attended a national gang training recently. Her son was murdered due to gang violence. She needs leaders in Washington communities to advocate and educate against youth violence and gang.

Commissioner Lopez Morton discussed the “Mis Monos” exhibition by Ms. Treviño’s other son. The exhibit was very powerful and delivered a strong anti-violence message. She shared the exhibit with the Spokane school district

Jose Rodriguez discussed the existence of a Crime Victims Compensation Fund available through L&I.

Gilberto Mendoza: Discussed housing issues in the Moses Lake area. The Moses Lake Housing Authority has funds for down payment assistance but has not yet met to discuss the distribution of the funds. There are no other resources in the area. Money is in an account gathering interest but it is not being used.

Commissioner Gaeta stated that this sounded like a compliance issue. He would like more information about this to follow up. CHA will issue a letter in regards to this community issue but more information is need.

Commissioner Tamez stated that money and resources are available. We need to be more diligent in accessing them.

Maria Vasquez-Garcia from Big Bend College discussed the Mattawa Even Start/Migrant Even Start program. Even Start offers ESL classes and parenting class to its families. Parents participate in activities with kids (all age ranges). Wants to see more parenting classes for recent immigrants to transition into the school system.

Janie Meza (OIC) stated that the One Stop Center in Mattawa & Moses Lake were planning to run the same classes.

Dr. Jose Vasquez from NW Family Therapy: NW Family Therapy provides mental health services to people that fall through the cracks (74% of clients are Latinos). Clients have paid with food (tortillas, beans, rice, etc.) for services and at end of the sessions, the food was given to the most needy. NW Family Therapy applied for funds through RSN for operation. Therapists were denied on the bases that they were over-qualified. They were told that Latino families don't need mental health services; we (Latinos) need cars/transportation, DSHS services instead.

A question was raised about the meaning of overqualified. Dr. Vasquez replied that it involved a perception that Latinos only needed case management. These persons (case managers) can have only high school diploma. Actual therapy supposedly is not really needed. Case study was done and mental health was the #1 need in community. Three current providers were on the committee deciding the fate of the NW Family Therapy.

Rosie Castillo: WSU Gear up Program serves 6-8th grade middle students in five schools. Ms. Castillo also discussed a sample affidavit form to present to higher education institutions who are unaware of the in-state tuition for undocumented students law now in effect.

5. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce efforts

Commissioner Barbosa discussed the North Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, of which she was the president prior to her term as commissioner. The NCWHCC was founded in 1997 by Phil Godinez, who was also a CHA commissioner. It began with four members and has grown to over 35 members. The organization functions solely on dues, about \$4000 raised. The NCWHCC goals include: assisting with business plans in Spanish, offering counseling to businesses, and offered workshops in business. Sponsored events include: Mariachi Festival, Fiestas Mexicanas, Public Forum for Candidates, & Scholarships. Executive team is all volunteers: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and 5 board members.

Gilberto Mendoza: Moses Lake Latino community is interested in forming a Hispanic chamber of commerce. There is some fragmentation in community. Latino businesses have not really pushed to bridge the two communities together. The goal for membership in the Moses Lake Hispanic Chamber is ½ professional & ½ business

owners. They plan to network with other chambers. If you have more information or ideas, Mr. Mendoza can be contacted at 509-766-2370.

6. Miscellaneous & Closing

Sergeant Kurt Adkinson announced a community meeting on November 13, 2003 at 6 pm. The meeting at the Town Meeting Convention Center in Moses Lake.

Commissioner Barbosa motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Tamez seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.